/522 cont./

165 Life expectancy at birth is about 43 years. It is a remarkably high value for peoples deprived of medical help, and notably superior to that noted in Black Africa.

[758] Evolution of mortality under the influence of medical assistance. It is interesting to show the extent to which mortality has been influenced by medical assistance since 1950. For this purpose we shall reconsider the same observations, taking into account the deaths which intervened between the first of January 1950 and the first of January 1958, the date to which we shall relate the calculations.

The survival curve obtained by stopping the calculations on the first of January 1958 differs slightly from the preceding one, which principally concerns the mortality of children. The mortality from 0 to 1 year is given by 35/199 = 17.5% instead

E /532 cont./
161 17. (cont.)
165 pathology of the Indians. The large epidemics causing numerous deaths have not reappeared for a century; they were the result of illnesses of recent introduction.

had been preserved from these illnesses, their demographic balance, in the absence of any medical help, would have been largely positive.

B R /533/
16 Biological characteristics and social behavior. In comparing the
[758] Boni Refugee Blacks and the Oayana Indians of the Upper Maroni, populations leading the same kind of life to a considerable extent, both deprived of any medical aid before 1950, we came to the following conclusions:

B
16 1. The Boni Refugee Blacks showed remarkable fertility and longevity. Life expectancy at birth before 1950 reached 43 years. The average number of children per woman over 55 reached 7.9 for the period before 1920. The Boni population increased 3% per year.

These remarkable characteristics can be explained by the resistance to malaria which the African Blacks possess, and by the fact that the Refugee Blacks descended from a double selection.

R
16 2. The Oayana Indians, on the contrary, show low fertility (3.7 children) and a life expectancy of only 31 years; until these last years they were dying out at a rate of approximately 0.6% per year.

R
161 These conclusions are confirmed by the historic data which
175 show the Oayana regularly decreasing in number since their first
R contact with the Europeans, passing from 3,000 at the end of
[165] the eighteenth century to less than 500 in our day. The extinction of the Indians can be attributed to their great sensitivity to malaria and to pulmonary illnesses.

/298/

Never do they appeal to the courts to settle their differences, still less their family quarrels; never do they beg for help.

The Europeans' material superiority does not impress them: the whites are more able in mechanics, but they are more able in magic, that is all. The efficacy of European medicine does not shake their convictions: if someone has reasons to believe himself victim of the anger of a gadu, he begins by making the sacrifices intended to appease it, then asks it for authorization to have himself cared for by the whites. Personally we have never done anything to disabuse the Boni of this idea which satisfies at the same time the requirements of medicine and those of social discipline, for it must not be forgotten that for them sickness is punishment for an offense. Thus one sees that unless it is deliberately brought to bear against tradition and against the leaders, the influence of Europeans is without appreciable effect on the civilization of the Refugee Blacks. It is no longer the same when contacts become too frequent, tend to alter drastically the way of life, and especially when these influences become openly "civilizing."

The Future of the Refugee Blacks

Obliged to solve all the problems of life by their own means, the Refugee Blacks have been able to adapt with intelligence to the evolution of the modern world, and their custom has kept all its vigor and effectiveness. Their future would not seem to be threatened if a wave of opinion had not come to the surface these past years, in French Guiana as well as in Surinam, to destroy their civilization, deemed primitive and barbarous, and to fuse them into the population of the coast. This result would be obtained in particular by schooling and evangelization.